

Assembly Bill 2560

SCHOOL HEALTH CENTERS ACT OF 2006

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ISSUE

School health centers are an innovative model for delivering health care to children and youth, particularly those who encounter language, cultural, or financial barriers that limit their access to the health care system. School health centers bring health care to a location that is familiar, convenient and trusted by children and families. When health care professionals are located in schools, they can work with teachers and other school staff who have daily contact with students and can detect health and behavioral problems early. This powerful partnership between health and education creates a true safety net for children.

California has 140+ school health centers, but is not providing the support needed to efficiently maximize the potential growth of this effective approach to strengthening its most vulnerable families. California ranks second in the nation with 140+ school health centers, and yet, we are one of only 9 states with more than 10 school health centers that do not receive state support. Twenty states have a state-level school health center program office/unit that is responsible for collecting school health center data, providing technical assistance, and managing health center certification and quality assurance practices.

In contrast, California's school health centers rely on a patchwork of funding that includes local, state and federal grants, private donations, third-party reimbursements and in-kind support from schools and sponsors.

Moreover, since there is no central clearinghouse for school health centers in California, there is insufficient data about the services delivered in school health centers throughout the state, as well as limited resources available for providing technical assistance.

EXISTING LAW

There is currently no existing California law or program providing direct support to California's school health centers.

THIS BILL

This bill establishes a program that will facilitate the development of comprehensive health centers in partnership with California public schools; address the programmatic, clinical, finance and policy needs of California's school health centers; establish standardized data collection procedures and maintain a database of information on public school health centers in California.

The intent of this bill is to create a State School Health Center Support Program jointly administered by the Department of Health Services and the State Department of Education.

SUMMARY

This bill as amended on August 22nd:

- Establishes a database of school health centers in California with standardized data collection procedures, and tracks preventative health measures implemented by school health centers.

Specifically, data collected will include:

- 1) contact information for each school health center;
- 2) annual number served by school health centers;
- 3) type and volume of services provided by each school health center;

- 4) information about other programs offered by school health centers with a focus on preventative health services to address health issues that are unique to school-aged youth such as obesity, asthma, immunizations, and child and adolescent mental health disorders; and
- 5) funding mechanisms.

- Acts as a liaison to the State Legislature and provides a biennial update to the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature on or before January 1, 2009.
- Provides technical assistance, direction and information to facilitate and encourage establishment of health centers.
- Identifies all available public and private funds to establish and operate health centers in schools in order to successfully draw down federal Medicaid funds, maximize third-party reimbursement, and obtain federal grants.
- Promotes outreach and enrollment of Medi-Cal/Healthy Families through school health centers while coordinating with the medical home.
- Serves as a liaison to other units within the Department of Health Services such as Medi-Cal and the Office of Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health; Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board; Department of Managed Health Care; Office of Emergency Services; and Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs.

BACKGROUND

School health centers can be found throughout California from Shasta to San Diego. Of the state's 140+ school health centers, 116 are located directly on school campuses, 18 are off campus but "linked" to one or more schools,

and 6 are mobile vans that serve multiple schools. Of the school health centers located on school campuses, 49 are in elementary schools, 15 are in middle schools, 45 are in high schools, and 7 are on mixed-grade campuses.

California's school health centers offer many benefits:

- School health centers provide **primary medical care** like any doctor's office or health clinic including immunizations, preventive health care, chronic illness management, and treatment for minor illnesses and injuries.
- Many school health centers also provide **mental health** services, and some provide **dental** care.
- Unlike community-based providers, school health centers extend **health care beyond the walls of the exam room** by linking students to activities and opportunities to practice healthy lifestyles such as campus bike clubs, yoga, or hip-hop classes.
- A key role of school health centers is referral and case management. They serve as a **gateway** to other services in the school and the community such as counseling, tutoring, after school clubs, employment resources, and social services. They also help families enroll in **health insurance** programs and learn how to use the health care system.
- School health centers promote **public health** in the school and community by conducting disease surveillance, providing school wide health education and promoting policies that improve health.
- School health centers are popular with **parents** for their convenience, familiarity, and parent classes. They support **teachers** by handling students' health and behavioral issues so that teachers can focus on teaching.

Q & A

Why do we need another state program?

Although the state already invests billions of dollars in the health and education of California's children, the lack of coordination between health and education programs often results in inefficiencies and missed opportunities. The School Health Center Program would strengthen current collaborative efforts between health and education so that resources could be used more efficiently and effectively to reach the children and youth who are most in need.

With California's schools already struggling, shouldn't we just focus on the basics?

Many school districts start school health centers because they recognize the importance of addressing health needs in order to enable teachers to teach and students to learn. Health centers keep kids in school which brings revenue to the school and increases students' achievement.

The state already has Medi-Cal, why do we need more health care programs?

Despite programs such as Medi-Cal and Healthy Families, California still has 800,000 uninsured children. Ensuring that these children are healthy and successful in school is in the interest of all Californians. Moreover, many of the children and teens enrolled in Medi-Cal are not receiving the health care they need. Innovative approaches to making health care more accessible are needed.

Who runs school health centers?

School health centers are run by many different types of organizations including school districts, federally qualified and community health centers, hospitals, county health departments, and nonprofit organizations.

How are school health centers different from school nurses?

School nurses are licensed nurses with a minimum of a baccalaureate degree and services credential specializing in health. They are authorized to perform health services for children in K-12 such as health assessments and illness and injury assessments and interventions. They also often participate in the development of Individualized Education Plan for students with special needs. However, unless they are licensed as Nurse Practitioners, they cannot provide comprehensive primary care.

School health centers are staffed by medical practitioners, including physicians, nurse practitioners and medical assistants, who are licensed to provide *comprehensive* primary and preventative care including prescribing and dispensing medication. Most school health centers are staffed by Nurse Practitioners who, in some cases, are also the school nurse.

Will students be getting health care without their parents' knowledge?

School health centers are extremely sensitive to the rights of both parents and minors and adhere strictly to California and federal laws regarding privacy, information sharing and minor consent. Parent consent is required for all services except those specified by California law.

SUPPORT

California School Health Centers Association (sponsor)
Adolescent Health Collaborative
Adolescent Health Working Group
Alameda Family Services
Alameda Family Services Youth
Educating and Advocating for Health
AltaMed Health Services Corporation
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
Asian Pacific Health Care Venture, Inc.
Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council
Bay Area Partnership
Bayview Hunters Point Foundation for Community Improvement
California Association for Nurse Practitioners
California Center for Civic Participation
California Center for Public Health Advocacy

California Dental Association
California Family Health Council
California Federation of Teachers
California Medical Association
California Mental Health Directors Association
California Pan-Ethnic Health Network
California Primary Care Association
California School Nurses Organization
Chaffey Joint Union High School District
Child Abuse Prevention Council
Children Now
Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles
Community School Solutions of California
Consumers Union
Daly City Youth Health Center
Dental Health Foundation
Epilepsy Foundation
Friends of the Culver City Youth Health Center
Gay and Lesbian Adolescent Social Services
Girls Club of Los Angeles
Hill Country Community Clinic
Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (County of Los Angeles)
Jefferson Union High School District
Korean Health, Education, Information & Research Center
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
Los Angeles County Office of Education
Los Angeles Free Clinic
Mental Health Association of California
National Assembly on School-Based Health Care
Northeast Valley Health Corporation
Para Los Ninos
Prevent Child Abuse California
Public Health Institute
School Health Clinics of Santa Clara County
Shasta Community Health Center
Shasta Consortium of Community Health Centers
St. John's Well Child and Family Center
Stockton Unified School District
Sweetwater Union High School District
Tiburcio Vasquez Health Center
Watts Healthcare Corporation

OPPOSITION

Citizens Commission on Human Rights
Concerned Women for America

STATUS

Bill passed the Assembly Committee on Health on April 4th 10-2.

Bill passed the Assembly Committee on Education on April 26th 8-3.

Bill passed off the suspense fill of the Assembly Committee on Appropriations.

Bill passed off the Assembly Floor 48-32 on May 31.

Bill passed the Senate Committee on Education on June 21 7-2.

Bill passed the Senate Committee on Health on June 28 5-4.

Bill passed the Senate Committee on Appropriations suspense file on August 17th.

Bill passed the Senate Floor on August 23rd 23-13.

The Assembly concurred in Senate amendments on August 28th 47-13.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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